1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE XXVI

a. Youth (Eastern Gaajak) with ash hair-dressing

b. Youth (Eastern Gaajok) after removal of ash hair-dressing

[Face p. 236]

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1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE XXVIII

301
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a. Youth (Zeraf river)

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b. Youth (Lou)

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c. Man (Zeraf river)

[Face p. 256]

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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1. A boy, clothed in ashes

[facing p. 24]

2;Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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m. A youth. His hair is dressed with ashes

[facing P. 48]

6: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1938
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

Much attention is devoted to hair-dressing in the dry season. In the rains the hair is sometimes neglected though never for a long time unless a man is in mourning. Nuer hair is naturally crinkly and black but when treated with ashes of cattle dung mixed with wood ash it is oxidised and becomes straight and golden. A man takes a heap of ash from his wind-screen fire, mixes it with wood ash, and places them on his sleeping skin where he removes any lumps, leaving only fine ash. To make the ashes finer still he beats them with a mallet and shakes and taps the skin so that the ashes are spread over it and can be searched for foreign matter which is then extracted. When he is satisfied he divides the ashes into two heaps, one of which he mixes with water. The Eastern Nuer do not use urine for this purpose as the Dinka and, to a lesser extent, the Western Nuer do. The scalp is now massaged with the damp ashes. When this is finished the hair is gathered into a peak at the back or front of the head and the dry ashes are sprinkled on top. The head remains for two or three days in its ash plaster which is then removed and the hair is sprinkled with oil. Nuer hair freshly treated in this way has a golden tint and glistens in the sun. Young men spend many hours in their wind-screens, after the cattle have gone to pasture, preparing their hair in this way.

By about 10 o'clock most of the men are sleeping behind their wind-screens, beneath trees, or, if the camp is near a wet season village, in byres. Only if game is sighted is there any male activity in the camp for an hour or two before noontide. The men grasp their spears and with their dogs [illegible]int after the animal to encircle it and run it down. After the firs[illegible] all able-bodied men leave camp to search for giraffe-tracks and if they find the animals they pursue them till they are exhausted and overtaken and speared. Nuer sometimes chase giraffe all day long and their endurance will scarcely be believed till it is seen, being especially remarkable when we recollect that they are weakened by hunger at this time of the year. But at the height of the dry season it is useless to hunt giraffe as they are too fleet on hard ground. While the men are sleeping the women are engaged in churning last night's milk.

THE TRIBE—HISTORY AND APPEARANCE

173 The Nuer people came to this country long ago, many, many years ago. In a country far away to the west, over across the Nile, there were many, many people.

Latjor, one of the Nuer chiefs, called his people to accompany him as he wanted to go to a distant country where there were no people.

They started out, travelling eastward. They came to the Nile at a point about ten miles south of the present site of Melut. They had no boats. The river was wide. They did not know how they could get across.

While they waited on the bank, talking the matter over, they saw a large blue heron standing in the middle of the river. They wondered among themselves whether it was standing on an island or on floating grass or possibly on a tree. Latjor, their leader, a tall, fearless man, said he would try to wade out to it and investigate.

He waded in. The water was ankle deep, then knee deep. A little farther on it was waist deep, but he waded clear over to the other side. Then his people were not afraid but crossed over after him.

This fording place is called the Ford of the Blue Heron because the blue heron showed it to them.

Latjor led his people eastward, seeking for a good location until they reached Abyssinia. An epidemic of smallpox killed many of his Nuer. Those who remained returned westward and settled in the uninhabited area through which they had passed. Latjor settled in Dwac which is a village in the Garjiok section. He named the different sections of Nuerland after his sons—Garjak, Garjiok, Lau, Gagwang, Geuwar, and Lak.

APPEARANCE AND CLOTHING

[141] The Nuer man is tall, muscular, straight of back, and clear-
302 eyed. He powders his whole body with ashes made from

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

cow manure until he is a greyish-white. He keeps his hair either cut short or shaved off entirely (possibly a tuft may be left on the top of the head), or he lets it grow long and bleaches it by frequent applications of cow-manure ashes applied wet. While the bleaching process goes on he may dress his hair in various styles with a point at the back or at the front or at both places. When the hair is bleached to a light bronze shade he dusts the ashes out of it and is quite proud of the effect. Long black hair is worn only by medicine men. The Nuer man may continue to adorn his body with ornaments and ashes and will especially do so if he is planning another marriage.

The Nuer usually have clean teeth. They clean them with cow-manure ashes, using a twig the end of which has been chewed into the semblance of a small brush.

Nuer men, possibly because they use ashes so constantly on their bodies, and probably because they do not usually wear clothing, seldom have lice. But the strands of beads worn by women and girls are often infested with them.

The Nuer age early, and both men and women look older than they really are. One would guess some of the older men one meets at between 65 and 70. The Nuer woman usually keeps her erect carriage, but in middle life her flabby breasts, broken teeth, or vacant places where teeth have been pulled out tend to increase the appearance of age.

Clothing is not considered essential by the Nuer man and is not usually worn. He may wear a bright coloured cloth—resembling a red plaid tablecloth, only somewhat more brilliant, he may be satisfied with a piece of the cheap blue cloth that is sold by the Arab merchant, his cloth may be of unbleached muslin, or possibly the District Commissioner has honoured him by giving him a cloth or (if he is a chief) one of the gowns they usually give the

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

301 A strand of beads, one black, one white, or one red, one white alternating, with a larger bead in the centre may be worn as a headband, the larger bead being worn in the centre of the forehead. A headband consisting of a number of round blue disks may also be worn (these are, however, bought from the Arab merchants).

Numerous finger and thumb rings are worn. A wire wrapped around the finger several times, or a ring with one or two long prongs may be stylish.

Styles—even in beads—change. At one time bead girdles were worn by the Nuer men, consisting of as many as one hundred and fifty strands of beads, but that fashion seems to be a thing of the past since 1925.

Nuer of both sexes delight in wearing a string of aluminium hearts around the waist (Fig. 3).

An older woman usually has but few ornaments. When she is married, she gives all her ornaments to her husband's people, who, in return, give her the married woman's dress and such ornaments as they wish to give her. She usually gives many more than she receives. Sometimes the husband may from time to time give her either necklace or bracelets, but more often the decrease in ornaments starts at the time of her marriage. Later on, she may give some of her ornaments to her children or to a relative. One frequently sees the older woman wearing wooden beads, and possibly some of the beads they get from the Arab merchants, but seldom has she giraffe-hair ornaments.

302 If a woman has only one child she may cut her hair, leaving one little tuft on top of her head, and one on either side, and also one in the centre front and back of her head to indicate this.

301 The Nuer girl adorns her body with many bead necklaces, iron or brass anklets and wristlets, headbands of

beads similar to those worn by the men, strings of beads 301
over each shoulder and under the opposite arm, and many strands around her waist. As she nears the marriageable age she has numerous strands of giraffe hair—with various pendants—about her neck.

She may also bleach her hair and wear brass bracelets [302]
on her arm. But she does not wear nearly as many of these brass bracelets as her brother, nor does she wear them as tightly, for no matter how much she may wish for ornaments, she must do her work of pounding the dura and must not incapacitate her arm for that work. None the less, the bracelets give many a girl a sore.

Wristlets are also made of giraffe hair with beads of various colours strung on the various hairs. These are quite pretty and add a bright bit of colour to a girl's arm. She usually wears a spiked bracelet—even the small children wear them—and they are a dangerous weapon when they are angry with one another, and wish to strike.

The Nuer girl has a hole pierced in the centre of her 301
upper lip. She may wear a blade of grass, a flower, or a 304
small stick of wood in it, but usually she wears a nail with the point sticking outward.

The ears of a girl are pierced in from five to seven places along the outer edge. This is done with a sharp-pointed native needle, and then little sticks or straws are worn in the holes in order to keep them open. The ears are frequently very sore and sometimes quite painful and slow in healing after this operation. The ears are usually pierced before the girl is in her teens, part of the holes being pierced at one time, the remainder when the first sores caused by the piercing are well. She often wears bead or grass ornaments in them. But the object of this is that the ears may be ready for the white beads which will be put in them when the girl is married. If

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

301 she has not already had her ears pierced, her husband
304 or his people may pierce all the places in both ears at once and put in the white beads that are the insignia of her married state. Whether her ears are sore or not, she must wear these white beads that proclaim her married status to all who see her.

301 Bands of beads may be worn on the upper arm or just below the knee. Sometimes strings of beads several inches in length are attached as pendants.

Feathers are frequently worn in the hair and sometimes in the lowest holes that are pierced in the ears. Sometimes a quill is worn in the upper lip.

[751] A newborn baby is not very old before it is attired in bead anklets, wristlets, or a necklace with charms to keep the evil eye away from the child. A strand of beads around the waist, sometimes with a tiny bell as pendant, may be worn. As the child grows older, if a girl, anklets of wire are put on. Also any little child may be seen with wristlets of wire. Shells or beads may be tied to the hair.

• 302 If an only child, the hair may all be cut except five little tufts, one being at top of head, one at each side, and one at the centre back and front.

301 Wooden beads are also worn by babies. No clothing
291 is worn unless some dress has been received as a gift and donned for special occasions—especially if the donor be present. The mother covers the tiny baby with her cloth if she possesses one.

301 As the child grows older, he wears more beads, either the wooden beads or those purchased of the merchant. But he wears no giraffe hair until—if a boy—he has the six tribal marks cut. A girl when nearing the age of puberty, or even younger, may begin to wear giraffe hair.

757 It is surprising how quickly the ulcers respond to treatment at first. Later, when they are partly healed, the process seems to be slower, an ulcer may persist in being almost but not quite well for some time. Scar tissue breaks down easily, and the bare Nuer limb gets many a scratch and bruise which tend to cause a recurrence of the sore.

[302] When a man is downcast because a sore is slow in healing, he may bind his hair closely to the head by sewing it with cotton thread until it has the effect of a hair-net. He may wear his hair like this until his cause of distress of mind and sorrow of heart is relieved. This in itself explains to those who see him that there is a reason why he is not adorning his body, and that he is not careless about his personal appearance without cause.

One attack of yaws does not render a man immune. Of course, those who have had no complete cure of the first attack are specially subject to a recurrence of this disease.

164 Leprosy is rare among the Nuer although neighbouring tribes are subject to it.

Trachoma probably causes more trouble in Nuerland than any other disease with the exception of yaws. It is so widespread, and is the cause of much partial and total loss of sight. Many have trichiasis, but when, as in the past, there was a doctor at Nasser many were relieved of this affliction by operation. At the Government hospital at Malakal, both in the past and in the present, relief was, and is, offered to all who come.

[136] Flies are so numerous in this land that they have a very active part in the spread of disease.

Amoebic dysentery also takes its toll of life and weakens the people, although it is not as prevalent as some other diseases.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE XII

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Youth wearing *thiow* (arm-rings)

[facing p. 234]